GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1047
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2000
ADULTERATION IN THE MUSTARD OIL
RASHID ALVI

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons died due to dropsy on account of mustard oil adulteration in the capital some time back;

(b) the details of the facts in regard to the dropsy and the action taken against those who found guilty;

(c) whether the special court is being set up to bring the guilty to early justice; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

(SHRI SREENIVASA PRASAD)

(a) 66 persons died due to dropsy epidemic which occurred during August-October, 1998.

(b) Monitoring of quality of edible oils was made stringent and surprise checks and frequency of surprise inspections were also increased. In August-September, 1998, the Consumer Service Centre, New Delhi analysed 2930 samples of edible oils and fats, of which 224 samples failed in PFA Standards. Ministry of Health was intimated for taking appropriate action. The Department of Prevention of Food Adulteration, Government of Delhi during the relevant period lifted 264 samples of mustard oil from different parts of Delhi. Out of these 101 samples were found to be adulterated with argemone oil/ polybromide/mineral oil. Prosecution proceedings have been launched against all the accused persons. The matter was also entrusted to CBI who after investigation filed chargesheet against the persons found guilty.

In order to ensure availability of safe and quality edible oils to the consumers, Central Government promulgated the Edible Oil Packaging (Regulation) Order, 1998. The Order mandates that the edible oils could be marketed only in packed form with proper label declaration etc.

(c) & (d) : There is already a special court set up for trying the prosecution cases under PFA Act. This designated court is presided over by Hon`ble Manoj Jain, Metropolitan Magistrate at Patiala House, New Delhi.